148. Creation of certain representative associations such as the village, taluk and district boards.

Mr. R. Parasurama Aiyar, B. A. (Member, Kunnattur taluk) said that the people were of late taking increased interest in public matters. It was therefore desirable to create representative associations such as village, taluk and district boards to train the people in ideas of self-government and to make them realise that the interests of the people and the Government were identical. That arrangement, he thought, would lighten the burden of administration on the Government and increase the convenience of the people. He proposed to deal with the taluk boards only as he considered that the village boards and district boards were only the miniature and enlarged forms, respectively, of the taluk boards. The taluk boards could be made to attend to minor public works, could be used as juries to help the judges and to promote co-operation in the various departments of life, such as agriculture, industries, commerce, education, and the like.

Coming to the constitution of the taluk boards, he considered that every person who paid an annual tax of Rs. 25, whose annual income was Rs. 500 and upwards, or who had an interest of Rs. 2,000 in any trading or banking business, and all graduates of recognised Universities might be voters and be eligible to be elected as members. There should be a member to represent 5,000 people. The Government should have recourse to nomination to give due representation to the minorities. A few official members should sit on the board.

The question of the formation of local boards was brought to the notice of Government at several of the previous sessions and elicited a favourable reply from the Dewan at the seventh session. During the succeeding five years nothing was done to fulfil the promise. He therefore invited the serious attention of the Government once again to that important question.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

149. Need for rendering the work of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly more useful to the public and Government by the formation, in the first instance, of District Boards.

Mr. S. Ramakrishna Aiyar (Member, Chirayinkil taluk) said that the functions of an Assembly Member ended with his presentation of two subjects at the Assembly. He was not allowed a second voice on the report on his representations by the head of department concerned and the Government disposed of the question on the merits of that report. The existence of the Assembly Member in their midst was lost sight of by the local officers reporting on his representations. The Assembly Members, even as a body, had no powers in the same way as non-official Members of Legislative Council or Town Improvement Committees, who could at least exercise those powers through their President. The only safe remedy for such an anomalous condition of affairs was the creation of district boards. The constitution and functions he would ascribe to the proposed district boards were as follow:—

(1) The members of the Assembly for each year in a Division, along with at least four District Officers, such as the Executive Engineer, District Judge, Headmaster of of a higher grade secondary school, a surgeon, etc., should form, under the presidency of the Dewan Peishkar, a district board. The board should meet at least once a quarter.

(2) They should discuss the representations noted for consideration at the Assembly and on which a report has been called for.

(3) They should discuss and pass resolutions on subjects relating to the well-being of the people of the district, for submission to Government.

(4) They should discuss before the final orders of Government were passed, any measures affecting the people of the district, submitted by heads of departments.

(5) They should call the attention of the heads of departments to the dereliction of public duty of the subordinate officers, where hard cases had resulted.

(6) They should serve, in general, as a standing committee of the Assembly.

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The Member said that the district board he suggested would fill up the gap between each Assembly and between the Assembly and the people. Several people, whom he had consulted, agreed with him in his proposals.

In reply to a query from the Dewan, the Member said that, according to his proposal, the members of the board will change every year and that, if the duration of one year was considered insufficient for any real work, it might be extended at the discretion of Government.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

150. Introduction of changes in the rules regarding the destruction of judicial and revenue records.

Mr. C. P. Kochukunju Pillai (Member, Kottarakara taluk) said that the recent rules regarding the destruction of records worked great hardships in practice. Many important records that were of immense use to the public were destroyed under those rules within short periods. The destruction of judgments and decrees in small cause suits, and the plaints and the documents in them, at comparatively short periods could be used by crafty persons in obtaining money from the innocent after a period of six years when there would be no evidence left. Oral and documentary evidence was also destroyed within short periods and the witnesses could state anything to the contrary without fear of detection. In the case of judicial records generally, their future utility as evidence was never thought of in fixing a very short period of preservation. In the case of revenue records also, they were destroyed within short periods even when they were the only evidence of title, possession or heirship. The Member therefore proposed the following periods of preservation in the case of the most important of the records:—

A. Judicial Records.

Name of record.	*Period of preservation.*
(1) Judgments and decrees in small cause suits.	For ever.
(2) Plaints and documents on which a small cause suit was based.	24 years.
(3) Original documents of title produced in civil and criminal cases, including small cause, and documents produced in evidence.	At least 20 years.
(4) Oral evidence.	20 years.
(5) Maps and plans and genealogical tables.	20 years.
(6) Registers of small cause cases and execution applications.	For ever.
(7) Registers of criminal cases.	Do.
(8) Judgments in criminal cases, original as well as appellate.	Do.

B. Revenue Records.

(1) Settlement enquiry cases.	Till the next settlement
(2) Revenue sale certificates.	For ever.
(3) Viruthi enquiry records.	Do.
(4) Records of puduval registration before the settlement.	Do.

Dewan's reply.—The suggestions made by the Member will be carefully considered.

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